

A DISCOVERY of the
Snake in the Grass;
Or a SPECTACLE for
WEAK EYES;

BEING A
SERMON

Preach'd at the
Arch-Deacon's Visitation
At **C A S T E R,**
IN THE
County of **LINCOLN,**
May the 14th, 1716.

By **J. G. Vicar of BARTON.**

*And Publish'd at the Request of Mr. CAWLEY,
the Official, Clergy, and others.*

NOTTINGHAM, Printed, by *W. Alsop*, 1716. Pr. 3 d.

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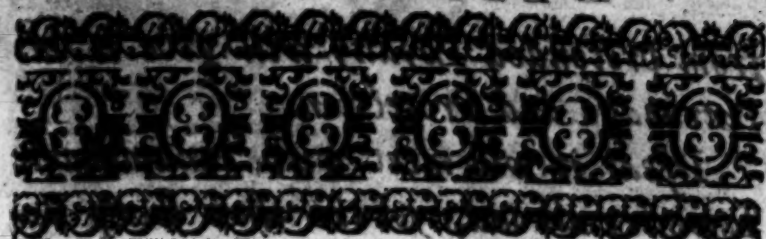
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TO
Mr. F. CAWLEY,

The OFFICIAL in
LINCOLN.

SIR,

YOU having done me the Honour
not only to approve of, and com-
mend this Discourse, but also to desire
that it might appear in the World; I
now humbly present it to your favoura-
ble Acceptance, not doubting but that
one who heartily wishes our unhappy Di-
visions were healed, and who easily dis-
tinguishes Zeal from Faction, and steady
from

DEDICATION.

from pretended Loyalty will give in his Patronage and Protection.

I fear it will meet with innumerable Enemies abroad, yet tho' their sharp Reflections shou'd be many and great, I hope those who are Good Church-men Loyal Subjects, and Peaceable Christians, like your Self, will not condemn its Author.

I have nothing more to add, but my Prayers to Almighty God, that this Sermon, together with your good Example, may prevail with this Nation, to fear God and honour the King,

Your most Humble

and most Obedient

SERVANT,

J. G.

Rom. x. v. 2. 3.

For I bear them Record, that they have a Zeal of God but not according to Knowledge, for they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of God.

THESE Words St. Paul spoke of the unbelieving Jews, who were so tenacious of the Traditions of their Fathers, and so utterly averse to any Reformation of Religion, that though it appeared by undeniable Evidence, that Christ Jesus was by God sent into the World for that Purpose, yet did they to the last stand out in their Opposition of him and his Gospel, even to the final Rejection of their Nation; to these People does St. Paul, in this Chapter express a great Compassion, heartily wishing

wilhing and praying for their Conversion : Brethren, says he, in the 1st Verse, my hearty Desire and Prayer to God for *Israel* is, that they may be saved, *i. e.* that they may come to the Knowledge of that Truth in Christ Jesus, and by that means obtain everlasting Salvation ; and one Reason why he was thus concern'd for them, he gives in the Words following, *for I bear them Record, that they have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge* ; he knew they were zealous for Religion, yet that Religion they were then so zealous of, was not the right Religion, for they were ignorant of God's Righteousness, and went about to establish their own Righteousness, so did not submit themselves unto the Righteousness of God ; and indeed if we bring the Matter a little nearer Home from the *Jews* to our selves, we cannot but easily perceive to our no small Perplexity and Disquietude, what Zealots there are in this our Nation, who are going about, and using their utmost Endeavours to establish that Righteousness which is not of God ; for by the word Zeal, is meant an earnest Concern for or against something, and a violent Pursuit and Prosecution of it ; 'tis in its own Nature indifferent like the rest of the Passions, but good or bad according to the Object and Degree of it ; thus in the holy Scripture 'tis used in a good Sense when applied to those Things

Things wherein the Honour of God and the Salvation of Men's Souls are concerned ; as when St. Paul told the *Corinthians* that their Zeal had provoked very many, and that Christ gave himself for us to purifie to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works, and that he was zealous of the *Corinthians* with a Godly Zeal ; yet that is a bad Zeal, or a Zeal not according to Knowledge which they have, who are filled with a furious Spirit of Persecution, and with such Contentions and Divisions as produce Wrath and ungovernable Passions, thus 'tis said the *Jews* were filled with Envy ; in the Original, 'tis, they were filled with Zeal, and spoke against those Things that were spoken by St. Paul, contradicting and blaspheming : They were filled with Zeal likewise, though not a true, good, or knowing Zeal, when they so vigorously persecuted their *Messiah* ; they wou'd not have God's Righteousness, even the Righteousness and Doctrine of Christ established amongst them, but openly declared their Affections and Principles to be contrary and opposite to such a Religion ; and as the *Jews* were distinguished for their Zeal, so ought too too many amongst us to be distinguished for theirs, they being endued with the Works of the Flesh, Hatred, Variance, Zeal ; they shew their wonderful Activity in plundering their Witty-Store-Houses, to invent and raise groundless

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Reflections and false (though mischievous) Rumours concerning State Affairs, in order to affright and terrifie others, causing them to be in Fear where no Fear is; and though they are never so obnoxious themselves, yet they drown the Noise of their own Crimes, by declaiming against Mistakes of their Superiours, though all they charge on the Government are only the Fictions of their own Malice; such Sort of People are there amongst us, that rail against, and dislike what is prudently and carefully constituted in our State; they are, and will be ready to make it their Business to pick a Quarrel, and to represent any Thing that's any way capable of a sinister Interpretation, under the most odious and frightful Shapes: These as *Reuben* like, are unstable as Water, who in respect to the Church of God, are Spots in our Feasts of Charity, Clouds without Water, carried about with Winds, raging Waves of the Sea, foaming out their own Shame, and with respect to the State, are they filthy Dreamers, defiling the Flesh, and speaking Evil of Dignities; these are they, who in the Words of my Text, *have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge*; for the Custom that the very Heathens had of Deifying their Princes, make it evidently appear, that Loyalty and Religion ought to be very nearly related to one another; these Christians therefore

therefore that contemn and offer Violence to their Prince, can have no good Zeal of, or sincerely reverence their God; they who wou'd impose every Conceit of their own upon the Publick, and are daily preparing for Alterations in Church and State, may be said to be zealously affected, though not in a good Cause: Thus the *Gnosticks*, those first and worst of Hereticks, and from whom a numerous Spawn proceeded to the great Disturbance and Detriment of the Church, and who were so impudent as to broach their Hellish Doctrines even in the Times of the Apostles themselves, and whom those holy Men in their Epistles so sharply inveigh'd against, had their Denomination from that high Opinion they had of their extraordinary Knowledge and Insight into the secret Depths and hidden Arcana's of Christianity; they spoke great swelling Words, says St. *Jude*, and were in the mean time so utterly strangers to the true Spirit of Christianity, which begins in purity of Heart and Life, and the sincere Love of God, that they gave themselves up to the worst of Vices, and therefore he calls them filthy Dreamers: And St. *Paul* intimates of them, that they pretended much to Philosophy and vain Deceit, or a sophistical and fallacious Way of arguing, in which they were continually jangling and disputing; and 'tis very observable, that those

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that in all Ages have come after them, and trod in their wicked Steps, have been like them in this; that they have been heady and high-minded, perverse Disputers, zealously contending against both Things and Persons which they ought not.

Secondly, Another Argument to prove, that there are such zealous Agents in this our Island, whose Actions are not according to Knowledge, may be drawn from the latter Part of my Text, they going about to establish their own Righteousness, being ignorant of the Righteousness of God; too fresh an Instance we have in our Memory, when they were for cashiering Churches, Liturgies, Priests and Sacraments, when they were for casting away the Righteousness of God, even our Religion, which is the pure and sincere Milk of the Word; and were for establishing their own Righteousness, the Righteousness or Doctrine of the Church of Rome; let their Pretences be never so plausible, yet 'tis a great Absurdity, if not an Impossibility to suppose that we might peaceably enjoy our Profession under a Papistical and Popish Governour, for those who count us Hereticks, and think, that if they kill us they do God good Service, they who swell with so much Envy against our Religion, wou'd, if they had the Power in their own Hands put those to

the Sword, who wou'd not turn and come over to their Way of Worship : How fantastickly fond of Change are they, and how destitute of Sense and the Love of their native Country who expect better Times under a *French* Conquest ? Is Popery grown less Bloody or Superstitious, or is not Arbitrary Government the same Thing that ever it was ? What then can Men expect from such a Revolution ? Wou'd he endure to be controul'd either by Law or Religion, or wou'd he be scrupulous and tender of our *English* Laws, Rights and Liberties ? These are such Miracles as no one in his right Mind can give Credit to ; who on the other Hand may not reasonably suppose, that all our Fortunes and Treasures wou'd soon be demanded solely at the Will and Pleasure of such a Prince ? Would he ever want Pretences to make such a Prince ? Wou'd he ever want Pretences to make such Demands appear just and reasonable ? Or wou'd he ever think his own Power and Interest secure, whilst there remained any Thing, either of our *English* Courage unbroke, our Fortunes unexhausted, or our Religion uncorrupted ? Who then, if not without Reason, wou'd wish or desire this our Enemy to rule over us, who wou'd bring along with him an heavier Yoak, then either we or our Fore-fathers were able to bear ; and who wou'd establish his own Right-

Righteousness even Popery and Persecution? Who wou'd not rather sacrifice his Blood in Defence of our Laws, Liberty and Religion, than to see them cast away, and the *Romish* Doctrine fixed instead of them? Which of you wou'd have your Harvests reap'd with the Swords of your Enemies, your Granaries, Barns and Houses every where on a Light Fire, the Country to be laid desolate, our Citties in Rubbish and Ashes; which of you wou'd tamely see your Wives and Daughters ravished before your Eyes, your Children murdered, and your own Blood spilt afterwards in Fields or Lanes, High-ways or Streets; and yet they who are for bringing him in to rule over us, are lending an Hand, and doing their Endeavours to destroy themselves, their Religion, and their Country: Since therefore the Being of our Church and Nation, the Liberty and Peace of *England*, and the Preservation of the Protestant Religion, depend so much upon the Success of his Majesty's Undertakings, and this upon the Chearfulness and good Affection of his Subjects, surely they are inexcusable who are zealously affected against him.

'Twas a Custom among the *Romans* and *Lacedemonians*, to infuse in all their Youth, the greatest Sense of their Country, the vastest Love to it, the greatest Foresight to apprehend the Danger of the Publick, and the most cautious Skill to avoid them; they reck-

reckoned that all the Virtues of Society, the Duties of Relations, and all Ties whatsoever, were to give Place to this, and it was the chiefest Point upon which the whole Education of their Youth turned; and indeed, had we the same Custom amongst us, we should live more in Peace and Amity, unless we should put false Constructions upon the Words, and act as some People do in this Nation, who think they shew great Zeal and Love for their Country, by endeavouring to bring in a Popish Governour, and would have you imagine that they have great Foresight, and can apprehend great Dangers from the Publick, to wit, the Parliament, whereas there is no Danger but what arises from their Faction and Commotions: Let us therefore, my Brethren, avoid all such wicked Practices, and take heed that we be not seduced into Heresie, Schism, or Sedition, neither run into Divisions and Factions amongst our selves, but seeing that we know these Things before, let us beware, least we being led away with the Error of such wicked and rebellious Spirits, fall from the steadfastness of our Obedience: Let us always be mindful of the Duty we owe to our Sovereign, and of the Happiness we enjoy under his Protection; and not only cheerfully obey the Laws and pay that Tribute by which his Government is supported, but likewise, as the Apostle exhorts, let Prayers, Supplications, and giving of Thanks be made
for

for all Men for Kings, and for all that are in Authority, that we live quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty; let us not suffer our Minds to be blown up with disloyal Passions, for that will cause us so far to forget our selves, as to offer such Affronts to his Majesty, as are neither becoming nor just for Subjects, nor decent, nor pious for Christians: But let us consider the Matter impartially, and we shall easily find, that tho' our present Sovereign acts contrary to the Principals of some Zealots in this Island, yet what he does is no more inconsistent with the Righteousness of God even our pure and undefiled Religion, than good Features are with Beauty, or Numbers with Harmony; what further Assurance or Promises can be given of defending our Church against its Persecutors, than what our Prince has done in several Speeches, and in his encouraging so noble a Work as building Places for the Righteousness of God even the Christian Religion; and therefore they are highly culpable and blame-worthy, they shew that they have a Zeal of God but not according to Knowledge, when they charge him for countenancing Fanaticism a Righteousness which is not of God, for as no Prince has ever been more careful to employ his Royal Authority to the Good of his People, than his Majesty has been, and to regulate his Power by the strictest Measures of our established Laws and

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Constitution; so will there never any thing be attempted or done by his Knowledge, or with his Consent, contrary thereunto; he will never act, nor knowingly suffer any thing to be acted, to establish any other Righteousness then that which is already established, and which properly and peculiarly belongs to God.

In the 14th Chap. of the 1st Book of *Samuel*, we read, that *Eli* could hear of the ruin of his Family, and the Loss of a Battle with an unshaken firmness; but how did his Heart faint within him, for fear that the Ark or House of God should be taken? And when he knew that this glorious Symbol of God's Presence was in the Hands of Idolaters, who were prophaneing and insulting over it; this Load was too heavy for him, he sunk under it, and died, ver. 18. So are there some good *Elies* in these our Days, who fear and faint, lest our Ark or Church should fall into the Hands of Idolaters even Papists, or into the Hands of Presbyterians, no less Enemies to our Religion, who would prophane and insult over it; but Thanks be to God, the Hearts of our Friends need not sink, neither the treacherous Betrayers of their Country and Religion shew their Joy, since we have one to wear the Crown who will stand up in vindication of our Profession: Indeed had not we our *Moses* to stand in the Gap, but that cruel hard hearted *Pharoah*,

roach, then cou'd we expect nothing less
 then the establishment of a new Righteous-
 ness, even the Righteousness of the Church
 of *Rome*: Why therefore shou'd any one
 wish to be under such Bondage, or suffer
 himself to be delivered up to such a repro-
 bate Sense, as to join in Conspiracies against
 his King and his Country, they are inexcus-
 able who put more Thorns into the Crown
 of our Ruler, and voluntarily press the
 Load upon his Head, for it may truly be
 said of the Crown of *Great Britain* in the
 Words of *Antigonus*, O Crown more noble
 than happy! If Men knew how full thou art
 of Cares and Dangers, no Man wou'd take
 thee up, though he shou'd find thee in the
 Streets, for though the Life of our present
 Governour is much more honourable then
 that of other Princes, yet is it much more
 troublesome, by reason of the Faction and
 Discord, of the Feuds, Heats, and Animo-
 sities that are amongst us, be not then restless
 and uneasy about an Assertion falsely and un-
 warrantably grounded, for that Generation
 of Vipers, even the Fanaticks, will never be
 covered under the Wing of our Sovereign,
 or warm'd with his Benignity and Favour;
 he never will pretend to establish their
 Righteousness, it being not of God, but our
 Righteousness, even our pure and undefiled
 Religion will he firmly and constantly main-

tain if we may draw a Conclusion from the Premises, for he has all along frequented the publick Worship and Service of God, and communicated likewise according to the Church of *England* when his Business wou'd permit; so that our Zealots rendred him Evil for Good, and lay to his Charge Things which he knows not.

Let us therefore my Brethren, I beseech you, be for the future more dutiful and loyal Subjects, being bound in the greatest Bonds of Gratitude imaginable, to do our utmost Endeavour to make his Days as easie, as they have been hitherto prosperous, that so those who have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge, and who are going about to establish their own Righteousness, not submitting themselves to the Righteousness of God, may see to their Shame and Grief, that though they have offered such inhuman, unthought of Abuses to our Governor, and though the Rain fell, the Floods came and beat upon our Church, yet both of them shall remain secure, and be kept free from all harm, being covered with the Wings of the Almighty.

Good God dispose the Hearts of all Orders and Conditions of Men amongst us to Christian Charity, Humility, and Forbearance of one another in the Spirit of Meekness,
that

that no Sedition may disturb this State, nor
 Schism distract this Church; but as we are
 Members of the same Body, and Professors of
 the same Faith and Hope, so we may with
 one Heart and one Mouth glorifie thee
 through our only Mediator Jesus Christ, to
 whom with thee, O Father and the Holy
 Ghost, be all Honour and Glory now and for
 evermore. Amen.

you be for the future more humble and lowly
 Subjects, being bound by the sweetest Bonds
 of Gratitude in kinde, to do our utmost
 Endeavour to make his Day as came, as they
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 of the Almighty.

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God God I will be the Father of all Orders
 and Conditions of Men amongst us to God
 from Church, Ministry, and for the service of
 of one another in the Spirit of Meekness,
 that